



HARD TO HIDE

(What connection do you think the following illustration has with the Bible texts on the other page?)

In 1996 a teenager named Grace was reading her English assignment at the window of her apartment. Suddenly shouting from the street caught her attention and drew her eyes to the scene below her. In frightening detail Grace witnessed a brutal murder in the back streets of a big city school yard, something she will never forget.

The police began their investigation by interviewing countless citizens in the area. Unfortunately, they quickly discovered that no one was willing to testify against a well-known drug dealer who was responsible for the murder.

Grace couldn't sleep at night because the event was graphically etched into her memory. She felt so afraid; she didn't want to tell anyone that she had seen the whole violent act clearly through her window.

The case was in all the local newspapers. Several pleas for witnesses went out from the police department, but no one responded because they didn't want to get involved, fearing possible retaliation from the criminal.

Grace couldn't go on without talking to someone. She finally spoke to a teacher about what she had seen, and then mustered enough courage to go to the police. After speaking with a detective, she decided to testify about what she had seen. However, she was still afraid. When she identified the perpetrator in a lineup, she was afraid. When she wrote out her statement of what she had seen, she was afraid. But as each stage of the process continued, her courage grew, and she became more committed to seeing the criminal get punished.

One day Grace received a letter from the mother of the boy who had been killed, thanking her for being willing to testify. "I don't know how I could live another day knowing that the man who killed my son was out on the street selling drugs and hurting others. Although I can't get my boy back, at least I can sleep, knowing his murderer can't hurt anyone else." Despite all the anxiety and fear Grace slept better knowing that she had done something worthwhile.



start

Key Text: Choose one of the texts from Wednesday's portion of the lesson. Write it here and memorize it this week.

>>

Sunday

HERE'S WHAT I THINK

>> Your school hires a new teacher right out of college. She has very little experience in teaching English to teenagers. She continually strikes out with the students. They are not being helpful. The teacher is losing her grip on the class and ultimately her patience. On your way home from school you see her driving out of the parking lot with tears in her eyes.

>> Read **Matthew 5:13-16** and then describe what a salty, light-bearing agent in God's kingdom would look like to her.

>> Log on to www.guidemagazine.org/rtf to post your responses. Be upfront and honest. Say what you think.

2

Monday

WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO SAY?

Different people, different opinions. Some of the quotations below represent the views of true kingdom citizens; others may not. Can you tell the difference? How do these statements compare with what God is saying in His Word? After reviewing the texts in the God Says . . . portion of the lesson, write a statement that captures your belief. Be prepared to quote yourself at Sabbath School.

>> "We should not ask, 'What is wrong with the world?' for that diagnosis has already been given. Rather, we should ask, 'What has happened to the salt and light?'"—*John R. W. Stott, current English pastor and author, chaplain to the queen (1959-1991).*

>> "A good witness isn't like a salesman; emphasis is on a person rather than a product. A good witness is like a signpost. It doesn't matter whether it is old, young, pretty, ugly; it has to point the right direction and be able to be understood. We are witnesses to Christ; we point to him."—*John White, 20th-century English-Canadian missionary, author, psychiatrist.*

>> "Salt, when dissolved in water, may disappear, but it does not cease to exist. We can be sure of its presence by tasting the water. Likewise, the indwelling Christ, though unseen, will be made evident to others from the love which he imparts to us."—*Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889-1929), India's most famous convert to Christianity.*

>> "No man can give at one and the same time the impression that he himself is clever and that Jesus Christ is mighty to save."—*James Denney, 19th-20th-century Scottish New Testament scholar and theologian of the United Free Church.*

>> "Shine / Make 'em wonder what you've got / Make 'em wish that they were not / On the outside looking bored / Shine / Let it shine before all men / Let 'em see good works, and then / Let 'em glorify the Lord."—*Newsboys, "Shine."*

Write your own quotation.
What I say is . . .

>>

3

Tuesday
SO WHAT?

- >> Some people think that when the big question comes to them about their allegiance to God, they will be able to stand and say, “I believe in Christ, and I will not deny Him!” When you look at the stories of Scripture, it’s not those life-or-death ultimatums that make the great witness for God, but the little moments along the way. Frankly, if we can’t stand up for God when it’s easy, why do we think it will be any easier when our life is on the line?
- >> Jesus told the disciples to be witnesses first in Jerusalem, starting close to home before working their way out to the ends of the earth. In reality Jerusalem was the hardest place in which to be a light because it was so close to home. The disciples had to be salt and light all day, every day, because so many people were watching them very closely. Some of the disciples never left Jerusalem, while others traveled to faraway countries; however, all of them let their light shine through the darkness, and their salty presence made the news of the gospel taste good.

5

Thursday
WHAT DOES THIS
HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

- >> Have you ever thought, *If I don’t say anything, someone else will?* Some feel as if their witness either isn’t that exciting or isn’t that useful. Wearing the name of “Christian” becomes hard when you don’t feel very useful in the cause of Christianity.
- >> You may remember a letter written to a guy named Philemon in the New Testament. The whole drama is about a slave named Onesimus who was owned by Philemon but ran away and ended up running into Paul on the way. Onesimus actually means “useful.” Paul makes a point to play on this, saying, “I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me” (**Philemon 10, 11, NIV**).
- >> Poor Onesimus. He has a name that means “useful,” but apparently he turns out to be “useless,” until he meets up with Paul and becomes a giant help to the apostle who is stuck in prison. Paul pleads for grace for this man, and we assume he received it from Philemon.
- >> The same grace is extended to us, even though we may or may not feel useful to God at this moment. You may feel as if what you say or do doesn’t matter. However, when we receive God’s grace in our hearts, we have something to do and say on behalf of the One who saved us. It’s safe to say that Onesimus wasn’t perfect, but he gave Paul all he could, and it turned out to be a bigger help than he thought. Onesimus was immortalized in the words of Scripture because he did his best to be salt and light for some old guy in prison. Who would have thought that in the end Paul would say about him, “I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you” (**Philemon 12, NIV**)? The important thing to remember from this story is that you may not know the value of your witness until later on.

4

Wednesday
GOD SAYS . . .

- >> **Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)**
“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”
- >> **John 13:34, 35 (NIV)**
“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
- >> **Colossians 4:6 (NIV)**
“Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”
- >> **Luke 14:34, 35 (NIV)**
“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.”
- >> **Acts 1:7, 8 (NIV)**
“He said to them: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’”
- >> **Philippians 2:14-16 (TEV)**
“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may be innocent and pure as God’s perfect children, who live in a world of corrupt and sinful people. You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky, as you offer them the message of life. If you do so, I shall have reason to be proud of you on the Day of Christ, because it will show that all my effort and work have not been wasted.”
- >> **Hebrews 12:1, 2 (NIV)**
“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”
- >> (More: Luke 24:45-49; Acts 10:39-43.)

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Friday
HOW DOES IT WORK?

- >> As you think about how you can be a witness, use the following illustrations to help you plan how you can apply this lesson to your life. Be specific!

Magnet—How can I attract someone to God this week?



Salt—How can I bring zest and flavor to someone’s life this week?



Light—How can I make the darkness in someone’s life go away?



Witness—How can I take the witness stand for God this week? How can I stand up for Him?



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